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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 AID-05 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6572
INFO USIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN

C O N F D E N T I A L JOHANNESBURG 2173

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJECT: PRESS CONFERENCE, COMMITTEE OF TEN LEADER

DR. NTHATO MOTLANA, HEAD OF THE SOWETO COMMITTEE OF TEN, GAVE A LUNCHEON PRESS CONFERENCE AUGUST 17 TO ABOUT 20 MEMBERS OF THE RSA FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION. WITH HIM WAS THANDI SIZWE MAZIBUKO, ALSO A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN AND SECRETARY OF THE BPC. DR. MOTLANA MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

1. THE COMMITTEE OF TEN MET AT THE REQUEST OF THE BPC, SASO AND "OTHER CONCERNED SOWETO GROUPS" TO DRAW UP A BLUEPRINT FOR BLACK AUTONOMY IN SOWETO. THE BLUEPRINT TOOK FIVE WEEKS TO PREPARE AND IS NOW BEING CIRCULATED AMONG THE PEOPLE OF SOWETO. THE COMMITTEE DOES NOT PRETEND TO BE THE LEADERSHIP OF SOWETO, RATHER IT IS "A CATALYST TO ALLOW PEOPLE OF SOWETO TO ELECT THEIR LEADERS." NEVERTHELESS, DR. MOTLANA IS CONVINCED THE COMMITTEE HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF SOWETO. FOR THIS REASON, THE COMMITTEE WHILE NOT ITSELF PARTICIPATING IN ELECTION FOR BODIES SUCH AS COMMUNITY COUNCIL WOULD NOT CALL A BOYCOTT OF ELECTIONS OF ANY GOV ERNMENT SPONSORED BODIES. SUCH GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED BODIES "HAVENT
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A HOPE" SAID DR. MOTLANA AND HE PREDICTED THAT WITHIN 18 MONTHS THE GOVERNMENT "WOULD COME BACK TO THE COMMITTEE OF TEN OR SOME OTHER BODY LIKE US AND ACCEPT WHAT IN EFFECT WE ARE OFFERING TODAY." HE DESCRIBED THE COMMITTEE OF TEN AS THE GOVERNMENT'S LAST CHANCE OF MODERATION" BECAUSE ANY GROUP FOLLOWING IT WILL NOT BE AS MODERATE. THE COMMITTEE WAS SURPRISED THE GOVERNMENT REJECTED THE PROPOSALS EVEN BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ASKED TO MEET WITH VORSTER.

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MOTLANA SAID "WE THOUGHT GOVERNMENT WOULD SAY 'HERE IT IS, YOUR BABY' AND SEE US FAIL."

2. THE POLICE ARE DELIBERATELY FORCING THE CLOSING OF SOWETO SCHOOLS BY
HARRASSING STUDENTS TO THE POINT THEY ARE AFRAID TO GO TO SCHOOL. HE SAID HE HAD MADE A TOUR OF SCHOOLS THIS WEEK AND FOUND THAT THREE ORLANDO HIGH SCHOOLS THAT HAD BEEN RAIDED HAD ALMOST NO ATTENDANCE WHEREAS MORRIS ISAACSON, WHICH HAD NOT BEEN RAIDED, HAD ABOUT 80 PERCENT ATTENDANCE. HE SAID "WHAT TEACHERS TOLD ME ABOUT POLICE TACTICS WAS UNBELIEVABLE." ONE HIGH SCHOOL PUPIL HUNG ON TO A TEACHER PLEADING WHILE POLICE HIT HIM, TORE HIS CLOTHES, AND TOOK HIM AWAY. ONE STUDENT WAS SHOT WHILE RUNNING FROM DOGS. THE COMMITTEE MET WITH THE SSRC LAST FRIDAY AND THEN TALKED TO POLICE, ASKING THEM TO KEEP OUT OF SITUATION AND STUDENTS WOULD RETURN TO SCHOOL. MOTLANA SAID, "THE RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR A LOW PROFILE WAS POLICE RAIDS...WHEN SCHOOLS ARE FINALLY CLOSED, LET THE WORLD KNOW THAT POLICE CLOSED THE SCHOOLS."

3. DR MOTLANA WAS PRESSED HARD ON QUESTION OF WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN AUTONOMOUS BLACK-RUN SOWETO AND AUTONOMOUS BLACK-RUN HOMELANDS. HE SAID THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT THE COMMITTEE OF TEN IS A BLACK INITIATIVE AND THE HOMELAND LEADERS ARE BEING "RAILROADED, BLOODIED" INTO ACCEPTING WHAT THE GOVERNMENT ORDAINS. BUT DR MOTLANA ACCEPTED THAT "SEPARATE GOVERNMENT FOR SOWETO IS IN FACT A COMPROMISE. WE SHOULD WORK FOR SEATS ON THE JOHANNESBURG
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CITY COUNCIL."

4. THE COMMITTEE OF TEN WOULD NOT ACCEPT AUTONOMY FOR ITSELF OR THE PEOPLE OF SOWETO UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED ALL THE FINANCIAL PROPOSALS IN THE BLUEPRINT BECAUSE THE CIT CCANNOT BE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS, AND WITHOUT LAND BEING GIVEN TO THE TOWNSHIP THAT CAN BE SOLD FREEHOLD FOR HOUSING AND INDUSTRY.

5. FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, THE COMMITTEE OF TEN AND THE STUDENTS OF SOWETO ARE THE SAME THING, NOT BECAUSE THE COMMITTEE IS ACTING AT THE REQUEST OF THE STUDENTS, BUT BECAUSE THE STUDENTS HAVE BEEN SAYING EXACTLY WHAT THE PEOPLE OF SOWETO THINK BUT HAVEN'T UNTIL NOW HAD THE COURAGE TO SAY. "STUDENTS REPRESENT THE GUT FEELING OF THE PEOPLE OF SOWETO...SO THERE WILL NEVER COME A TIME WHEN THE VIEWS OF THE STUDENTS AREN'T VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE OF SOWETO...IT IS NOT OUR AIM TO CONTROL STUDENT MILITANCY. OUR AIM AS PARENTS IS TO SEE STUDENTS GO TO SCHOOL. WE WANT BANTU EDUCATION ENDED. WE NEITHER ENCOURAGE NOR DISCOURAGE MILITANCY."

6. ASKED ABOUT CHARGES OF SOWETO RIOTS BEING COMMUNIST-INSPIRED,

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DR. MOTLANA SAID THE AFRIKANER HAS ALWAYS HAD A BOGEYMAN "TO FRIGHTEN THE FAITHFUL TO VOTE CORRECTLY," WHETHER IT IS BRITISH CONTOL OVER SOUTH AFRICA, MONDALE'S ONE MAN ONE VOTE, THE RUSSIANS OR BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS. "THEY ALWAYS REFUSE TO FACE FACTS."

DURING THE LUNCHEON PRIOR TO THE PRESS CONFERENCE, ABPAO NYOKA HAHN SAT NEXT TO THANDI SIZWE MAZIBUKO, THE BPC SECRETARY AND MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN, WHO TOLD HER BPC WAS THE REAL INITIATOR BEHIND COMMITTEE OF TEN BUT THE BPC WAS TAKING A WAIT-AND SEE ATTITUDE ON THE COMMITTEE BECAUSE ONLY TIME WILL TELL IF IT IS SIMPLY ANOTHER EVENT OR SOMETHING MORE MEANINGFUL. HE ALSO SAID IT IS NOW OFFICIAL BPC POLICY NOT TO ACCEPT ANY US GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO VISIT THE STATES. HE SAID STEVE BIKO HAD ACTED PRETTY MUCH ON HIS OWN IN REFUSING A GRANT FOR THIS FISCAL
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YEAR, BUT THE POLICY IS NOW OFFICIAL, TAKEN BECAUSE "ANDREW YOUNG CAPITULATED TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN AUTHORITIES AND WITHDREW HIS DEMANDS TO SEE SOBUKWE AND MANDELA AS A CONDITION TO BE ALLOWED IN SOUTH AFRICA." HE SAID NO MEMBERS OF THE BPC WOULD MEET WITH YOUNG OR ANY OTHER US OFFICIALS UNTIL THEY HAD SEEN SOBUKWE AND MANDELA.

MS HAHN ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN TO MR MAZIBUKO WHY BPC WAS RECENTLY REFUSED THE USE OF USIS SOWETO READING ROOM FOR A MEETING, I. E. AS MUCH TO PROTECT THEM SINCE READING ROOM HAS BEEN CLOSELY WATCHED LATELY AS TO PROTECT THE NEUTRALITY OF THE READING ROOM TO KEEP IT FROM POSSIBLY BEING CLOSED DOWN ALTOGETHER. MR MAZIBUKO WAS SURPRISED AND SLIGHTLY AGITATED. HE SAID HE KNEW OF NO SUCH REQUEST EITHER BY THE NATIONAL BPC OR THE SOWETO CHAPTER. HE SAID, "IT MIGHT'VE BEEN A SET-UP AND YOU SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS." HE PROMISED TO CHECK IT OUT AND LET USIS KNOW IF THE REQUEST HAD COME FROM ANY BPC MEMBERS.
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Subject: PRESS CONFERENCE, COMMITTEE OF TEN LEADER DR. NTHATO MOTLANA, HEAD OF THE SOWETO COMMITTEE OF TEN, GAVE A LUNCHEON PRESS CONFERENCE AUGUST 17 TO ABO UT 20 ME
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